

# *How to Homeschool High School*



BY BETSY SPROGER

BJ'S HOMESCHOOL

# About the Author

Betsy is mom to her now college grad, whom she homeschooled through high school. She blogs at [BJ's Homeschool](#) about the early years, high school, college, and gifted/2e. She is the author of the book [\*Homeschooling High School with College in Mind, 2nd Edition\*](#).

She offers homeschool help through messages at [BJ's Consulting](#). Chat with a mom who is just like you!

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## *4 Steps to Planning*

# High School at Home

When we began thinking about homeschooling high school, it felt more than a little daunting to us.

We had been homeschooling for years but the thought of doing high school meant that we would have to make transcripts, assign high school credit and other things that we did not yet know how to do.

I checked out some homeschooling high school blogs, and talked with my friends, to get advice from them on where to start.

That helped a lot. And we also continued with some of our curriculum favorites from our middle school years....

We went ahead and homeschooled all the way, and I am so glad that we did. Homeschooling kept our family relationships strong, throughout the important teen years.

Today I'd like to share 4 steps for planning high school at home, based on our experience doing just that.

# 1. Core Studies and Graduation Requirements

When I talked with my homeschool friends about high school, they said to start at the end, not the beginning..

What? Start at the ending?

I recommend looking at where my teen might be heading, once she graduated from our homeschool. By looking at what your teen will need to graduate, that will tell you what core courses will be needed, and that is a good starting point.

Since my daughter wanted to go to college, we researched the college entrance requirements at a few colleges that she might like to attend.

That gave us a list of core studies that she needed to complete. Much more on how to find out your teen's freshmen college application requirements is in my book, described below.

If your teen is not heading to college, you will likely have A LOT of leeway, as to what courses to do in homeschooling high school.

Most states give the parents a lot of choice as to what to study during the high school years, and when to graduate your student from homeschool. But some states do not.

So it's important to know the Homeschool Graduation Requirements for your state. That way, we would know what was required, then we could add in all the extras, like electives, field trips, etc.

Keep in mind that many states do not set out a specific list of homeschool graduation requirements.

To find out more about homeschooling in your state, I suggest connecting with your state homeschooling group. This link lists all of them, throughout our country.

In WA state, for example, we got to decide these for ourselves. But if your state has requirements for homeschool graduation, it is good to know that first.



## 2. Special Interests and Electives

Our second step was to consider what special interests my teen had, or was interested in developing, which could become her homeschool high school electives.

My husband and I talked a lot with our daughter about her needs and interests. My teen was excited about learning video-making, doing some photography, and taking irish dance classes.

We made sure to leave lots of room in our plan for developing these interests.

If your teen doesn't know what they are interested in yet, they will have plenty of time to discover that during their high school years.

High school at home allows us to foster, grow, and encourage them! And homeschooling gives your teen lots more time to explore their own interests and discover their talents and gifts.

High school electives and activities can also help with getting into college, and [my book](#) has more information on that.

### 3. Choosing your High School Curriculum

My teen knew she needed to complete her requirements in the basic subjects (LA, social studies, math, foreign language and science). But, we still did not forget about her interests. They framed her electives.

Here are two great resources for your homeschool high school curriculum search:

- This [Let's Homeschool High School curriculum high school homeschool directory](#) is the most complete one I have seen. And it includes TONS of links, with many reviews.

- [The Curriculum Choice](#) - Here veteran homeschool bloggers share curriculum reviews of resources that they used in their own homes.

I am on the author team there and share my favorite high school curricula there, too.

For help with grading, Vicki from [7 Sisters Homeschool](#) has help for [Figuring and Recording First Quarter Grades](#), which I recommend.

## *3 Ways to Assign*

# High School Credit

*What is a credit, anyway?*

And when we get in the business of assigning credits to our kids, where will that lead us? Will we lose the very benefits that led us to homeschooling in the first place?

At first assigning high school credit seemed so daunting to me. Would we have to finish every textbook, cover to cover, or calculate every quarter hour and record it on a form? And could we still make our own homemade courses for some subjects?

As homeschoolers, we look for signs of learning, and as we work with our kids, 1 on 1, we know what they are getting and what they are missing.

Assigning credit is just a way to translate what your child has accomplished into terms that the outside world can understand.

We found it to be a lot easier than we first thought. We found that we could assign credit and still keep our homeschool style using three different approaches to high school credits.

# 1. The Textbook Method

- When your child is working in a textbook or online program for one year, then she has earned 1 credit.
- Then, for one-half credit, an academic course (such as American Government) typically would require one semester or one-half year to complete.

Here's more on this from HSLDA:

"If your child completes a high school-level text by a reputable publisher in an academic area (math, science, English, foreign language, or history), consider the material covered to be one credit. A one credit course typically requires one school year to complete."

It doesn't require that you check off every page, but that 75% or more has been covered.

*"Covering the material in a textbook does not necessarily mean doing every problem, answering every question, or reading the book from cover to cover, but you should diligently cover the material presented. Some authors calculate teaching 75% of a textbook to equal one credit, but the bottom line is, don't shortchange your child."---HSLDA*

This method of assigning credit can work just as well with an online course, from an established publisher, such as SOS, Tapestry of Grace, Oak Meadow, IEW, Ambleside Online, or Time4Learning, etc.

We used this method for our Oak Meadow Literature and History courses, and also for our science and math.

My teen worked for a year in each of these courses, but there was always room to focus more on one topic than another, and adapt it to her interests and needs.

But what about courses that are interest-led, or homemade?



## 2. The Hours Method

Here is a question that I often get - "What about homemade courses, such as homemade Lit courses, where your child reads their choice of classics, and writes essays about them, that you have assigned?"

In this case, a rough calculation of hours spent can give you guidance in assigning credit.

from HSLDA:

*"For courses that do not use a standard high school-level textbook (perhaps you are putting together your own unit study, or you are using an integrated curriculum), log the hours that your child spends completing the course work. One credit is approximately 120-180 hours of work. The upper end of this range (180 hours) is usually appropriate for lab science courses, while 150 hours is the average for a year long academic course such as English or History."*

They go on to say that this doesn't mean that you have to calculating every 15 minutes spent on the subject!

*"Don't become legalistic in keeping track of each minute, but generally, when evaluating credit for an academic course, a good rule of thumb is 50 minutes a day, 5 days a week for 36 weeks, for a one-credit course. Logging hours is a good method of determining credit for elective courses such as art, music, sewing, carpentry, web page design, and homemade courses in core subjects, too."----- HSLDA*

So then, a half credit can be earned by working, say, 2 times a week, for approximately 36 weeks.

We used the "hours method" for these three homemade courses:

1. Speech and Debate - I kept a running tally of hours spent in Youth and Government meetings, etc.

For example, my teen attended Youth and Government activities, which included public speaking practice and debate at their regular meetings and later at state wide meetings. We calculated a total of 90 hours, so this became a half credit course.

2. Visual Art - We did art project two times a week for a year, ie, 36 weeks, which gave her one half credit.

3. Photography - We worked on this two or three times a week, going out with our cameras to do nature photography. I taught my daughter myself. It became a half credit course for fine arts credit.

### 3. The Mastery Method

Whether your teen has mastered the concepts or skills over the course of a semester or even just during the high school years, credit can be awarded for mastery of that subject.

Take, for example, a homemade course in film production. My teen worked on a video, learning concepts and skills, made a video, and then entered it in a contest. It was accepted, and received a small recognition.

This indicated a beginning mastery in video production, so she earned her credit that way.

Say, your child wants to study drama. She signs up for a drama activity, gets a part, and participates in practices and a production. This shows a beginning level of mastery in drama, and could be half or full credit based on the length of time spent in learning.

This method could also apply to an apprenticeship. For example, you might award your child credit hours in based on working with someone skilled in, say, auto mechanics.

Once she shows mastery, as determined by the skilled mechanic who is doing the teaching, she can receive high school credit for her work.

Assigning credit became something that my daughter looked forward to doing. It was a tangible sign of all the work that she had accomplished.

So I leave you today with some encouragement from Let's Homeschool High School:

*"College preparation doesn't have to be complicated. For homeschoolers, it is simply a series of planning stages that parents and students go through to make sure they are on the right track." ----LHSHS*

And it is still possible to stay on your own homeschooling path.

It just needs to be adapted for the process of "homeschooling towards college", with the emphasis on homeschooling....and you are on your own wondrous journey!

Homeschoolers are being widely accepted by colleges, especially when they have good course descriptions and quality reference letters coming along for the ride.

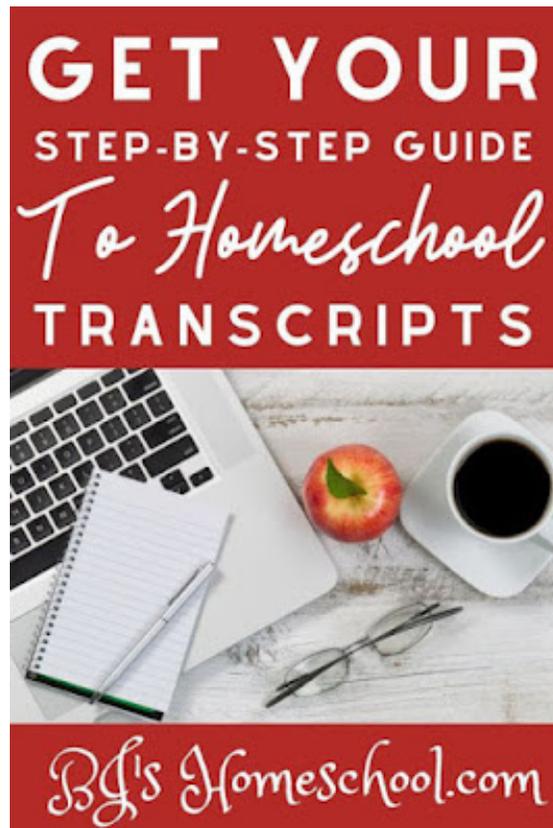
# Get a FREE Transcript Guide

*Does the thought of making transcripts lead to overwhelm?*

It did for me, when I was starting out.

That is why I put together my guide to making your **Homeschool Transcripts**, which I offer as a freebie to you.

**Click the image below to get your free copy!**



# About my Book

## Homeschooling High School



## With College in Mind

by Betsy Sproger

After you finish reading this book, you will feel **CONFIDENT** and motivated to take the next steps to educate your teens and prepare them for college.

~ Kelly Malleck, Homeschool Association President

### *Homeschooling High School with College in*

*Mind* is available in paperback or Kindle editions on Amazon.

It is the culmination of 14 years of homeschooling, including successfully through the high school years .

The book includes not only advice and real life examples, but 12 planning printables to help you along the way!

Get all the details and purchase a copy here:

